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Book Review

Compte rendu de livre

Veterinary Medicine: A Textbook of the Diseases of Cattle, Horses, Sheep, Pigs, and Goats, 11th edition, Volumes 1 and 2

Constable PD, Hinchcliff KW, Done SH, et al. Elsevier, St. Louis, Missouri, USA. 2017. 2308 pp. ISBN: 9780-7020-5246-8.

I found this 2-volume edition of *Veterinary Medicine* attractively put together, easy to navigate, and thoroughly useful as a comprehensive and complete reference text. In its 11th edition over 56 years it has stayed faithful to its initial ideology while encompassing the ever growing amount of new information, new diseases, and new diagnostic and therapeutic techniques. Both volumes are hefty, coming in at about 1100 pages each, but the general eye-appeal is catching, from the colorful photos on the front cover to the color-coded chapters, numerous tables, diagrams, and photographs.

The 4 main authors are from disparate parts of the world (United States, Australia, United Kingdom, and Germany), with 9 contributing authors from Canada, the United States, and Australia, giving the book an international perspective (the authors having been educated in and/or worked in 12 countries and 5 continents). The first few pages are tributes to the 3 senior authors of past editions, Radostits, Gay, and Blood, making one realize that this is an evolving and ongoing project, fueled by Blood and Henderson's lectures and, at the time, novel approach to teaching, namely that the principles of pathophysiology explain disease syndromes (as opposed to rote learning which was popular at the time of the first edition, 1960), and that pathophysiology plus epidemiology lead to diagnosis, treatment, and control.

The current book has adhered to these principles, but also addresses the immense change we have seen in agriculture, politics, climate, trade, economics, and animal welfare since the 1960's, and how these have impacted large animal practice. There is an excellent 7-page introduction describing the intent of the voluminous information within the text, and is definitely worth reading.

The book is divided into 21 chapters; the first 6 chapters (examinations, biosecurity, systemic states, body water, antimicrobial therapy) concern, perhaps, the more mundane aspects of the profession, but in my mind the building blocks of a solid understanding of large animal medicine. I found these chapters excellent to peruse and the old adage of Otto Radostits came to

mind, "You miss more by not looking than by not knowing." These are the chapters which new graduates might benefit from by reading — perhaps before they start their first job! The remaining 15 chapters are dedicated to diseases of specific organ systems. The detailed table of contents at the beginning of each chapter helps locate specificities within the subject. The text is broken down into headings, subheadings, and sub-sub headings, each one a different color. Important key words are in bold type, and each subject culminates in a list of further readings and references. Two useful features at the beginning and end of each heading is the "Synopsis Box" and a "Differential Diagnosis" box, and 2 small tables easily picked out and handy if just a quick reference is needed. There are many tables and pathway trees throughout; lots of these have been brought over from previous editions and some are large and a bit overwhelming, but packed with comparative information that can be studied thoroughly with time. Color photographs and diagrams are more limited, but of good quality and useful. I found the descriptive prose very thorough, perhaps too much for some tastes, but one can pick and choose the detail one wants or needs to go into because of the well-demarcated organization. In this sense the book really is what it purports to be, a comprehensive book useful for all walks of large animal medicine, whether it be the equine cardiologist (this section seems particularly detailed) or the first year student (how to conduct a clinical examination). As with most exhaustive texts, there are appendices. Strangely, the conversion tables have a convoluted method for changing metric to imperial. The Reference Lab Values (compiled from different labs, one being Prairie Diagnostic Services at the Western College of Veterinary Medicine), and the Drug Dosages are handy to have. I did notice a few typos (double/missing words), a couple of pages of blurred print, and incorrect page numbers in the index, but minor errors considering the tome.

As a practitioner, it might not be the book I grab from the shelf while the cow is standing in the chute, but it would probably be the one I sit down with at the end of the day (over a glass of wine). I would recommend it to anyone starting, or being in, a career in large animal practice as a mainstay for the bookshelf. I think it will continue to be one of the most widely used and authoritative texts in large animal veterinary medicine today.

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